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## SABOTAGE CASE

## Gayeshwar, Rizvi among 173 BNP men discharged

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday discharged a total of 173 leaders and activists of BNP — including its standing committee member Gayeshwar Chandra Roy and senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi — from a case filed over sabotage charges in 2018.

Judge Shihabul Islam of Dhaka Special Tribunal-16 passed the order after their lawyers submitted separate petitions for discharging them from the case.

BNP leader Advocate Zainul Abedin, Barrister Kayser Kamal, and Shama Obayed are also among the accused.

According to the case statement, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was returning home after appearing at a special

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A mother gently cradles her child, wrapped snugly in a shawl, shielding them from the chill of a winter morning. The photo was taken in the capital's Farmgate yesterday while they were returning home from school together.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## ‘She suffered in jail, was deprived of treatment’

Khaleda's lawyers tell SC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's lawyers yesterday told the Supreme Court that she (Khaleda) suffered in jail and was humiliated and deprived of proper treatment for many years because of the Zia Orphanage Trust case, which was filed on false allegations.

"There was no evidence in support of the allegations brought in the case... I went to the authorities concerned for her proper treatment but she did not get it," senior advocate Zainul Abedin, a lawyer for Khaleda Zia, said.

He said this while presenting arguments before a five-member bench headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed during the second day's hearing on Khaleda's appeals against a 2018 High Court verdict that increased her jail sentence from five to ten years.

Khaleda's another lawyer AM Mahub Uddin Khokon said this was a politically motivated case.

He appealed to the apex court to grant the appeal and acquit her from the charges.

The former prime minister, aged 79, landed in jail on February 8, 2018, after a Dhaka special court sentenced her to five years in the case.

While five other accused, including her son Tarique Rahman, were given 10 years' imprisonment for misappropriating over Tk 2.1 crore intended for orphans, the special court cited Khaleda's age and status to impose a lighter sentence.

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North shivers  
IN COLD

STAR REPORT

Sagar Islam, a farmer of Tegra village under Dinajpur's Biral upazila, has been looking to hire farm labourers to prepare lands for Boro cultivation.

However, amid the ongoing cold wave, he has been struggling to find anyone to work in open fields.

"Hardly anyone is willing to work in this severe cold, and many are demanding extra pay," he said. "But I need to prepare the land, as time is running out," he lamented.

The severe cold weather in northern districts, including Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat, has disrupted lives and livelihoods.

In Dinajpur, cold winds from the Himalayas, overcast skies, and slight drizzle since Tuesday night have caused significant hardship. Most residents stayed indoors, seeking warmth under blankets or around fires.

Those who could not afford to stay home, especially low-income people and daily wage earners, suffered greatly while working outside in the biting cold.

Tofazzal Hossain, acting officer at the Dinajpur Regional

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## Secure Dhaka airport from bird strikes

Urge flight safety officials at workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top flight safety officials from various airlines yesterday expressed concerns over bird strike hazards at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) and urged regulators to take action to address the issue.

They said the airport is particularly prone to bird strikes.

At a workshop organised by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), safety officials from four airlines also highlighted the challenges posed by low visibility during winter due to dense fog, which often forces flight diversions and causes passenger inconvenience.

They suggested upgrading the airport's Instrument Landing System (ILS) from Category 1 to Category 2 to address the visibility issue.

The workshop was organised by CAAB at its auditorium, following recent aviation disasters, including South Korea's Jeju Air plane crash on December 29, which killed 179 people on board.

According to an Al Jazeera report, the pilot had reported a bird strike moments before the plane crashed.



**Bird strikes are common in Bangladeshi airports. The presence of waste collection centres, landfills, and dense bushes near the airport area attracts birds, particularly black kites, posing significant risks of bird strikes.**

**Anwarul Haq Beg**  
Professor at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University

Aviation experts said bird strikes during take-offs and landings are particularly dangerous as they can cause jet engines to lose thrust, potentially leading to accidents.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines

officials said bird strikes, though not fatal, frequently damage their aircraft at HSIA and other airfields.

Officials of other airlines said bird strikes have become frequent at Dhaka airport, resulting in significant financial losses.

Presenting his paper, Capt Intekhab Hossain, deputy chief of flight safety at Biman, noted 10 major bird strike incidents between May 2023 and May 2024.

Referring to the Jeju Air crash, he urged CAAB to implement measures to deter birds in and around the airport to avoid such accidents.

Capt AAMA Shamsuzzaman, head of safety management at US-Bangla Airlines, said HSIA's bird strike rate is three times higher than the global average.

Citing International Air Transport Agency data from January 2023 to October 2024, he said HSIA recorded 173 bird strikes per 1,000 flights, compared to 0.5 at other international airports.

Talking to reporters, Capt Kamrul Islam, head of safety at Air Astra, said bird strikes can occur

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## Special cell on July uprising formed

It will ensure rehabilitation of victims, documentation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-discrimination Student Movement yesterday formed a special cell on the July mass uprising to ensure medical care for the injured and rehabilitation of the martyrs' families, documentation of the uprising, bringing the attackers under trial and building a martyrdom memorial.

Arif Sohel, member secretary of the platform, made the announcement before the journalists at its central office in the capital's Banglamotor.

"We thought the interim government and others would work giving the highest priority to those who were martyred and injured in the July mass uprising. The initiatives taken in this regard are completely inadequate," said Arif.

"We are not able to properly evaluate the injured brothers and sisters and martyrs due to various reasons. That is very sad for us. Because the freedom we enjoy today is only because of their sacrifice," he also said.

The events of the July uprising are also not being properly documented, added Arif.

THE CELL

Hasan Imam, who is associated with the student platform, was made the secretary of the cell.

The cell consists of four teams. Of the teams, a 19-member one will work for medical care and rehabilitation, a 16-member team will make the documentation, a five-member team of lawyers will accelerate trial proceedings and an eight-member team will work for the memorial.

IJTEMA CLASH  
23 accused get anticipatory bail from HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail to 23 accused, followers of the Tablighi Jamaat faction aligned with Maulana Saad Kandhalvi, in a case filed over the death of four devotees at the Biswa Ijtema ground in Tongi on December 18 last year.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Mahubul Islam and Justice Md Hamidur Rahman granted them anticipatory bail till submission of the police report in the case.

The court passed the order after holding hearing on two bail petitions filed by the accused.

Barrister Abdullah Al Mamun accompanied by lawyers Shahin Hawlader and Khaja Tanvir Ahmed placed arguments on behalf of the petitioners, while Additional Attorney

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## Dismissed BDR members, families demand justice

Continue sit-in at Shaheed Minar, warn of 'Shahbagh blockade' if demands not met

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Families of the dismissed BDR (now Border Guard Bangladesh) members have vowed not to back out of their seven-point demand, including bail or release of innocent members of the paramilitary force arrested after the 2009 Pilkhona massacre.

They have decided to spend the night at the Central Shaheed Minar to press home their demands, which also include the withdrawal of all false cases filed after the incident against the force members.

The family members warned they would "blockade Shahbagh" if their demands remained unmet, during today's (Thursday) hearing at the metropolitan special tribunal-2 of Dhaka.

Mahin Sarker, a member of the executive committee of Students Against Discrimination, who joined the protesters, confirmed the developments to The Daily Star.

"We will wait for the court orders. If the demands are not met, then we will blockade Shahbagh and continue our protest," he said.

Mahin said, "Some 2,000 people, including the

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, AMRAN HOSSAIN

Families of dismissed BDR (now BGB) members gather at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday, demanding justice for the victims of the 2009 Pilkhona massacre, and reinstatement of dismissed personnel. Police intercept their procession at Shahbagh, *inset*, while they were marching towards the state guest house Jamuna, the chief adviser's residence.

